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NSC BRIEFING

16 JANUARY 1955

NORTH AFRICA

- I. Despite recent favorable developments in Morocco, over-all North African situation continues to deteriorate. No prospects for early alleviation or solution of various problems.
  - A. Relative harmony between Moroccans and French, which has prevailed since return of sultan two months ago, appears to be disintegrating.
  - B. A major issue is Berber tribal rebellion (in Rif area of north-east).
    1. Sultan refusing to yield to French pressure, issue surrender call.
    2. Sultan, and principal nationalist party (Istiqlal), probably have no direct ties with rebellion but consider it useful bargaining position with French.
  - C. Friction also developing between newly installed Moroccan cabinet and French residency regarding functions, transfer of power.
    1. Delay in commencing negotiations for new relationship--"independence with interdependence"--already causing impatience among Moroccan extremists.
    2. Foreign Minister Pinay has indicated 15 Feb earliest possible date that new government could begin talks.
  - D. Whenever talks may bring difficulties are expected even though Paris would probably be disposed to be flexible

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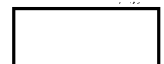
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- II. In Algeria, rebels and terrorists, emboldened by political vacuum in Paris and depressed morale among local administrators, have stepped up operations.
- A. Rebel aim appears to be isolation of large enough area to proclaim "free Algeria."
  - B. Mayor of Algiers (leading French liberal in Algeria), forecasts general insurrection in 60 days, if Paris has not replaced collapsed governmental machinery by something realistic.
  - C. Some moderate Algerian Moslems, who are still seeking to bridge gap between France and Algerian extremists, give France 30 days to find solution before general insurrection.
- III. In Tunisia, break between moderate Neo-Destour president, Habib Bourghiba, and extremist Salah ben Youssef (party's recently ousted secretary general), is source of rising tension.
- A. French authorities acutely apprehensive over revived rebellion in south and on Algerian frontier.
  - B. To date, Bourghiba has retained popularity, but serious Tunisian economic crisis is major factor favoring extremist Ben Youssef.

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